

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph [0002] with the following rewritten paragraph:

[0002] In photolithography process which is one of the production processes for a micro device such as a semiconductor device or a liquid crystal display device, an exposure apparatus which performs projection exposure of a pattern formed on a mask onto a photosensitive substrate, is employed. This exposure apparatus has a mask stage for supporting a mask and a substrate stage for supporting a substrate, and performs projection exposure of the pattern of the mask onto the substrate via a projection optical system while successively moving the mask stage and the substrate stage. In the production of the micro device, in order to increase the density of the device, it has been demanded to decrease the size of the pattern to be formed on the substrate. To meet this demand, the higher resolution of the exposure apparatus has been desired. As one of the means for realizing this higher resolution, a liquid immersion exposure apparatus is proposed which forms a liquid immersion area by filling a liquid in a space between the projection optical system and the substrate and performs an exposure processing through the liquid in the liquid immersion area as disclosed in the following patent document 1.

Patent document 1 : ~~International Publication Pamphlet No. 99/19504~~ International Publication Pamphlet No. 99/49504.